consultants have been appointed. Acquisition of land for Right of way is in progress. Orders have been placed for supply of indigenous line pipes. The approved project cost is about Rs. 917 crores.

(b) Work has been allotted to M/s. Bechtel for back-up consultancy, M/s. EIL for project monitoring and construction supervision and M/s. SAIL for supply of indigenous line pipes.

(c) As per the Government approval the project is expected to be commissioned by 1993.

SAARC strategy for population control

35. KUMARI CHANDRIKA PREMJI KENIA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a meet on population policy of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries was held recently at Delhi; if so, when and the number of delegates who participated therein; and

(b) whether it is a fact that in the meeting it was highlighted that there has been substantial growth in the size of population of the SAARC countries; if so, what steps were recommended in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI D. K. THARA DEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) Yes please. It was held at New Delhi from the 7th to 10th October, 1991 in which 11 delegates representing Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka participated.

(b) Recognising the problem of the rapid growth of population in the region, the workshop made many recommendations to tackle it. These include the need for (1) evolving well defined national population policies with definite goals and objectives, (2) strong political commitment in support of the population control programmes, (3) promoting active community participation in implementation o these programmes, (4) increasing coverage of younger age couples with high fertility potential through vigorous promotion of spacing methods, (5) strengthening of programmes for maternal and child health care and (6) collaboration amongst the SAARC Countries to pool and share experiences to further improve their national programmes.

Ban on smoking in public places

36. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND WELARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to enact a legislation for prohibition of smoking in public places and for imposing ban on consumption of tobacco as well as its products in public offices; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard and by when a Bill to this effect is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI M. L. FOTEDAR): (a) and (b) Administrative instructions have already been issued to prohibit smoking, to start with, in a few selected public places namely hospitals, dispensaries and other health care establishments, educational institutions, conference rooms, domestic air flights, air conditioned chair-cars and air conditioned sleeper coaches in trains, sub-urban trains and air-conditioned buses.

Passenger amenities in long distance trains

37. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of RAILways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the existing amenities for passengers in the trains, particularly in long distance trains, are inadequate;

(b) whether Government have since contemplated any fresh efforts to improve these amenities;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a three-member committee was set up to inspect passenger amenities provided at railway stations and on trains;

(d) if so, whether the committee have since submitted its report to Government; and

(e) if so, what are the details of the recommendations made by the committee and by when the same are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (b) Amenities as per existing norms have been provided in the trains. Upgradation and improvement of facilities/amenities for the passengers is a continuous process. Some of the additional facilities provided in trains in the recent past include provision of cushions in Second Class sleeper coaches, water coolers in some trains, bed rolls in AC Sleeper coaches, Train Superintendants in some Super Fast trains, mobile train cleaning staff in selected trains increase in water tank capacity on B.G. Coahces from 1,272 litres to 1,820 litres, etc.

(c) A One-man Passenger Amenities Committee has been constituted by the Government.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Project on AIDS Control

38. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently finalised a project on AIDS control and prevention for the entire country;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether the World Health Organisation and USAID also propose to extend external funding support for AIDS control in India; and

(d) the manner in which Government propose to implement the scheme in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI D. K. THARA DEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) and (b) Yes, the Government in consultation with WHO have prepared a Project document on AIDS Control, both at Central and State level. Financial assistance for this Project is being provided by World Bank. The components of this project are as under:—

—Improve blood safety and rational use.

—Promote public awareness and community support.

—Build surveillance and clinical management capacity.

—Control Sexually transmitted diseases.

—Strengthen Programme Management capacity.

(c) Government have prepared a Work Plan for Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Manipur, West Bengal, and Delhi under Medium Term Plan for prevention and Control of AIDS in India. The WHO is supporting these action plans activities by getting financial assistance from various Donor Agencies. The USAID is providing financial assistance to the tune of $ 1 3 millions in the form of equipments for up-grading 65 Blood testing centres.

(d) Government has proposed to strengthen surveillance of HIV and STD cases, screening of blood products and creation of awareness among the general public, etc.